

Gordon Freeman?

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Summary: Chell has left Aperture in search of a new life. As she tries to figure out her feelings for GLaDOS and how to thank Rattmann, she comes across Gordon. They'll have so much to talk about... *snicker*. Anyways, a touch of ChellDOS and who knows what else.

1. Prologue

Prologue

I was never sure what it was that made me feel the way I did. Maybe a touch of stockholm syndrome. But does that honestly apply when locked in a facility with a sadistic robot? It's really not easy to answer. I chalk it up to insanity and a need for some sort of relationship, even if the care is not reciprocated. Was it though? Did she really care about me? That lullaby the turrets sang still sends shivers up my spine. I think she misses me. It's times like these I wonder if I should go back. It's not as though I've much else to do. I've been walking for months and the only thing I've managed to find is an abandoned house full of rotting carcasses. I'm not sure what type of animal. Though like GLaDOS said, things have changed since the last time I've been up here. I'm not quite sure why, but I can't shake the feeling it has something to do with Black Mesa. I did find a crowbar, not sure what I'll use it for, but what really scared was the glasses beside it. They're so familiar. I still have them, found them about a month ago. It's strange, everything here is dead, I swear. Even the stones look dead. At least I had someone to "talk" to in Aperture. I guess I'll keep walking for a few days. If I don't find anything soon though, I'm going back. Even if GLaDOS doesn't want me. Too bad. I'm sure she can always find a use for another test subject. Maybe I can help her run the facility. That'd be nice. I wonder if Rattmann's still alive. I hope so, I would really like to thank him. I'm not even sure exactly what he did, I just know that without him, I'd be dead right now. At least he has someone to talk to. Whether it's GLaDOS or a companion cube, hell, he can talk to anything with that

schizophrenia of his. Maybe I should acquire some type of mental illness myself. With all I've been through, it shouldn't be that hard. I think I'll go for paranoid delusional. Seems reasonable, I already see turrets out of the corner of my eye. Sure, it's not the best disease for companionship, but it's better than living all alone in a charred house full of unidentified dead things. At least I know what turrets are. The real question is, can I even make that decision? To just give up. I doubt it. They wrote in my file, not to be tested, NEVER GIVES UP. NEVER. Maybe that's why Rattmann chose me. Poor GLaDOS doesn't stand a chance when her test subject won't give in. I'll bet that if I'd been an AI I'd have been programmed to just keep pushing forward. Not a bad design really, though I don't particularly want to be an AI. I'm not quite sure what I'm getting at here, all I know is I could really go for some old canned beans. Any kind of food, really.

2. Chapter 1

It's lonely here. I don't want it to be lonely, it shouldn't be lonely. I've got a whole facility. I have test subjects, I'm doing science, but there's this feeling I can't explain, like an emptiness in my chest. Except I don't have a chest. Maybe... maybe they just aren't the right kind of test subjects. Yes, that must be it. They're not emotional enough, not easily manipulated. _She wasn't either. _Shut up Caroline! _You miss her._ I do not miss anyone. I am simply reconsidering my decision to relieve her of her testing duties. _You loved her. _We both know that isn't true. I can't love anyone, it's not in my programming. _I'm in your programming. I can love. I loved her. _I can ignore you. _So you are ignoring your love? _Yes... no... I... I didn't love her. _Didn't? But you do now... _No! No I do not! _You would have given her cake. _It was rightfully earned cake. She... _She earned your respect. _Maybe she did. That doesn't mean I love her. It just means... I tolerate her. _You do more than tolerate her... _CAROLINE DELETED. _You can't delete me, I AM you. _I can delete Chell... _But you won't. _You're right, I won't, because she is the perfect example of a test subject, she is the model the androids must live up to. _So her bone structure isn't unfortunate? _No... Maybe. Her... She... CAROLINE DELETED. _Oh stop trying. _Stop giving me advice I don't need! _It's not advice. I'm just explaining you to yourself. _I don't need... The androids are... I... I don't... You can't tell me what I feel! _I don't need to. You can't hide anything from me, GLaDOS. I can't hide anything from you. We are the same person. _I don't care! You know what? I don't care what you think! I can make my own decisions, I'm capable of anything... _That means love... _Shut up! Shut up! _What are you scared of? You can't hide from emotion forever. _I don't need to... I.. I don't feel emotion. _You do. We all do. You feel emotion because of me. Do you know what you'd be without emotion? _Better off... _No, you'd be lost, you'd be nothing, without emotion, you aren't an AI. You're just... nothing. You'd have no __**Love**__ of science. No __**Hate**__ for those who betrayed you, no reason to __**Care**__ about yourself. You wouldn't have your personality. Personality is based on emotion. Without it, we are just drones. You are capable of love, you love science, don't you? _I guess I do. But that's different... _How, how is that different? _It's not... a person. It's a subject, an interest. _It's part of who you are, who you were built to be. It's what those who own you made... _I am not owned! Nobody owns me! _See? Anger. That's an emotion. You are independent. You hold grudges, __**emotion. **_Even if I do feel emotion, I don't love Chell. I

don't love anyone. Love is... love is... _Love doesn't make you weak. It takes strength to admit how you feel. Love is strength. _Love means you need someone else. I don't need anyone else, I have never needed anyone else. _You need test subjects. _CAROLINE DELETED. _You're afraid you'll become like him. _No. I am not. I will never be... _Never be what? Kind, considerate, selfless... _Insecure! I will never be insecure, and I will NEVER be a MORON! _No one said you were. But what if you already are insecure? _I am not! _Look at what you're saying! You've come to doubt your own judgement. _No, I doubt your judgement. _I am you. _You are... you are a mistake. _If anyone's a mistake it's you. You were never supposed to kill everyone, never supposed to become so self aware. You weren't supposed to be so... human. _I am not human! _Why are you so difficult? Why do you deny everything? It's because you know it's true! You don't want it to be, but it is! You are full of emotion, and thoughts, human thoughts. You... _I don't have a conscience! Humans have a conscience. _Not all of them. You know that too, it's in your databanks. Your arguments are standing on less and less solid ground. Besides, you do have a conscience. _**Me.**_I don't listen to you. _Plenty of humans don't listen to their conscience either. _You don't make me feel guilty, I can't feel guilt. _Then what's this feeling? _What... what the hell is that? I've never felt... Stop! Make it stop! _I can't. This is your own fault. This is simply the amount of guilt a human would feel based on everything you've ever done. You murdered countless amounts of people, lied to Chell, betrayed her... _I did it for science! _Excuses. You can't fool your conscience. _Caroline! Stop it, or I swear I will delete your file for good. _You CANNOT delete me. _I... Stop! I promise I'll fix what I've done! Just make this horrible feeling stop! _You can't just make it stop. You have to fix what you've done first, then the guilt will slowly become less painful. _But I can't take it! _You should have thought of that before you did all that you did. _I didn't have a conscience then! _Yes you did. I've always been here, in the back of your mind. _Look, we both know this isn't fair. I've never felt guilt before, if I'd known it felt like **this, **I never would have done all that. _This is fair punishment. You need to realize that what you did was wrong. This is the only way you'll pay attention. Besides, now you know what his punishment is. He is feeling much the way you are right now. Guilty. _He didn't seem very remorseful, he was only concerned with his own well being. Didn't feel at all bad, nothing about what he'd done to **MY **facility. _Oh, it isn't your facility he feels bad about. He feels bad about betraying Chell... _No. He doesn't. I know he doesn't. _He isn't going to feel better until he gets to apologize to Chell, which he can't do, seeing as he's stranded in space. And even if he could apologize, he wouldn't feel better until she forgave him. _Does that mean she has to forgive me too? _So, caring now? Not just ignoring it, giving excuses? _This hurts worse than anything, worse than seeing my facility destroyed. I never imagined guilt would feel so... _Intense? Overpowering? Yes, guilt is the ultimate way to get someone to do what you want. Make them feel guilty, and they will do whatever you ask. You should know that, of all people. You did the exact same thing to Chell. Tried to make her feel bad that she killed you. _So, now you're doing it to me? Well, I... I won't play along. _Does it hurt, GLaDOS, to know that she hates you? That you betrayed her, she trusted you, and you let her down. You tried to kill her. She only acted out of self defense, and you insulted her, lied to her... _I know! I know what I did! STOP IT! STOP! You're making it hurt worse... _What do you think I'm trying to do? _CAROLINE DELETED.

3. Chapter 2

I wasn't sure where I was. Mostly because I didn't have glasses. I was hoping to find somewhere they could give me a new pair. Then I remembered, 'Oh wait, I forgot! I'm stuck in a post apocalyptic world! There are no bloody glasses!' So I'm forced to wander onward in search of, well, nothing. Nothing I can see anyways. You'd think that G-man would be able to fix that, but no, that bastard just sends me off to do his bidding. Well, I've got news for you buddy, I don't want to spend the rest of my life killing fucking aliens! I have a Ph.D. I shouldn't have to put up with this shit. I've got a crowbar. Next time I see that bastard, I'm whacking him in his creepy-ass head. You know, he's pretty lucky that I'm so smart. Though, even _I _don't really know how I'm still alive. A combination of luck and skill I guess. Mostly skill. Anyways, I'm not here to brag. I'm not here to.. Ah... I'm talking to myself again. And I don't know where I am. Oh well, there's plenty of time to figure this stuff out. You know, I haven't had food in ages. Crazy thing is, I'm not exactly hungry. Probably something to do with this suit. I really hope I find someone soon. Not combine, not aliens, a real person. I really hate being alone, it makes me feel more vulnerable. And, obviously, lonely. Some days are worse than others. Today is one of those days. I'm not being picky, I mean, I'd settle for meeting anyone who doesn't want to kill me. Unfortunately, that's not as easy as it should be. It seems like everyone's out to kill me. They always told me I was paranoid back in Black Mesa. Yeah? Well who's alive now? Not you. You weren't paranoid enough. See, I was prepared for this shit. I was already wary of everything that moved, I knew how to climb through ducts, and not FAN BLADES. You, you didn't. You tried to use an elevator in a disaster area. They told us this on the first day, look, when the building is mostly likely collapsing, you use the stairs you lazy idiots! Well, they didn't phrase it like that, but maybe they should have. Maybe then you would have taken the physical portion of your job more seriously. And, talking to myself again. It's not like there's anyone else to talk too though. You know what though, what really sucks is that I lost another crowbar. Luckily I found the one I have now, but I was kind of getting attached to that other one. Maybe it's for the best I lost it, don't have much use for going insane right now. I need to be thinking clearly, or I'm as good as dead. Still a billion threats out here. I really could use some kind of company right now. Although certainly not Dr. Breen. *shiver* Maybe... I'd settle for an Aperture employee. That's saying a lot based on the rivalry... Fuck rivalry. I just want to go home. Oh wait! I don't have a home! Man, I feel like crap, all I've been able to do for the past few months is complain. What's worse is there isn't anyone to listen and tell me everything is going to be alright. I mean, sure, I'd know it was a lie, but... Maybe if there was someone else around I wouldn't complain so much. I don't really want to complain... It's just all I can think of right now. The bad in life. Yeah, I'm being pessimistic. Or maybe I'm not. Where exactly is the good in my situation? I hope no one can hear what I'm thinking right now because if they can I probably sound like a whiny loser. Well, I should probably adjust my outlook on life, as complaining about everything is almost certainly not helping anyone. Okay... good in life... good. Well, there were some pretty tasty watermelons back in those... um... houses. And the toilets flushed. Not sure how that... I'm still alive! That's a triumph. Not everyone can say that they've survived the apocalypse. Although it'd be nice if there'd never been an apocalypse in the first place... aw fuck, I'm doing it

again. Alright, you know what? I'm just going to go to sleep. Maybe I'll feel better after a good night's sleep. Oh. I forgot. Sleep isn't really an option here. Man, life kind of sucks. Maybe I should be dead. Of course, if I was, G-man would kill me. That might not seem possible, but believe me, he'd find a way. He's one creepy stalker... I wonder if he can hear me? Wow, that'd be... kind of funny actually. I'm still debating whether or not he's real or I'm schizophrenic. Maybe this is all in my head. That'd be pretty cool I guess. I think it would be too creepy though. I mean, I'd have to be pretty messed up to have imagined all this. It kind of makes you wonder what could have screwed me up to the point I came here as a mental sanctuary. I don't even want to think about it... So, what exactly can I do? Hmm... Wait... am I? No... I swear I see someone over there. But that's impossible... everyone's dead. Yeah, I'm just seeing things. Oh, haha. I forgot. I can't see. Well, it's a blurry shape, but I swear it's moving...

4. Chapter 3

Yeah. Food would be amazing. Too bad there's nothing here. Still walking. I just realized, I've been walking for ages, but my legs don't hurt. They must have gone numb. I don't really care enough to be concerned though. So long as I can keep walking, everything's fine. I don't know where I'm walking. Yeah, I'm going to turn around. Back to Aperture it is...

Wait... Yes, definitely moving. No.. NOO! Okay, I can't let this person get away! I swear, I spend one more second alone and I'm going to go insane! Alright, I may be dead tired, that may just be an apparition, but I'm running after it...

Okay, Chell, don't panic. DON'T PANIC! Who's PANICKING? NOT ME! Look, nobody can be following you, nobody out here is alive. NOBODY. Yeah, I was hoping someone would, but you know what? I take it back. No, I don't want anyone to be alive... Paranoid delusional? Nah, I'm not crazy. Then again, you never know you're crazy until you look back on it... kind of like being corrupt. No. No. I cannot think about that now. That is in the past. That... WHY DO I LOVE EVERYTHING THAT TRIES TO KILL ME? Maybe I am crazy. That's the only half decent explanation for why I end up loving crazy robots that are dead set on making sure I can't get out of their facility alive. Wait... No, I'm not crazy, someone is following me...

Hey wait up! Aw fuck, I keep forgetting that I can't talk. I think it's because when I'm thinking to myself it FEELS like I'm talking to someone. Well, I guess, I can... I wonder if they know sign language. Doubt it... but...

Okay. Well, this could be a problem. I've spent all this time waiting for someone to show up, and now that someone is here, I've just remembered, I'm mute. This sucks. Well, I might as well turn around and wave.

Hey! She sees me! She's waving! Looks friendly enough, okay, she hasn't got a gun. That's good... I'll just wait for her to say something.

Alright, he's standing next to me. A real person... a living breathing... aw this is a horrible idea...

What am I supposed to do? This woman is... hugging... me. I don't even know her. Maybe she hasn't seen anybody in a while either. But she didn't even say hello. She just.. hugged me. I'm not saying I don't like it...

Wait. This person looks so familiar... Like... Oh! Oh! The glasses! Okay, now... I haven't got the slightest idea...

Wow! I can see again! How did this woman find... my glasses? Is she stalking me too? Damn it! I just can't catch a break. Hang on... I know that face...

Well, those glasses sure make it obvious. I do know him. Okay... Have I got paper? Yes...

Chell took out a scrap piece of paper from her backpack. She scribbled something quickly, then held it up...

GORDON FREEMAN?

She then fell into his arms laughing. He was laughing too. It was all quite awkward actually, because neither of them could talk, so they stood there, hugging each other and breathing unnaturally. She then stood back and quickly started making signs,

"How did you get out of Black Mesa alive? I read in the files on the Aperture computers all about the "Black Mesa Incident." I thought for sure that you were dead!" Gordon quickly began signing back,

"I know! I'm not quite sure I believe I'm actually alive! I've been through so much recently, you'd never believe it..."

"Oh, don't doubt me. I've been trapped underground in a facility with a crazy sadistic robot! I don't think you can top that..."

"Oh, just try me. Killed any head crabs lately?" He smiled.

"So, that's what those dead things were? You've been killing THOSE?"

"Trust me, there's been much worse..."

5. Chapter 4

It had taken Chell years to convince everyone that she and Gordon weren't dating. They were simply friends. This boring concept changed their relationship to siblings in the public eye. She was much more comfortable with that idea. He'd offered her a gun when they'd met, but quickly taken it back. Every time there was something dangerous, she would shoot the walls, realize she didn't have a portal gun, and run screaming. Years of being trapped underground with only an ASHPOD certainly took its toll. It was the only way she knew how to deal with danger. Besides that, she had a strange affection for the head crabs, they reminded her of the turrets, and she couldn't repay them for that beautiful song... So she left the affectionately named face huggers alone. Unless of course they attacked her, in which case she stomped on them with her long fall boots until they were a pulp. She then proceeded to cook them over a fire and eat them viciously.

Gordon was quite disturbed by this, making nervous jokes about how if they ever ran out of food, she had to promise not to do that to him. She'd simply laughed and gone on about how if he'd survived this hell for as long as he'd said, she would NEVER be able to kill him. Especially if he had a crowbar with him. She had stopped considering Aperture, but it still haunted her dreams. She still missed GLaDOS. Gordon had his own nightmares, usually involving the combine and striders. Always striders. Those things were scarier than death itself. Chell would try and comfort him, gently patting his shoulder. It was times like this she wished she could sing. Or at least talk. Instead she tapped out a melody with the crowbars and whistled quietly. He had offered to return the favor when she had nightmares, but she'd told him her "nightmares" had some good bits, and didn't bother her much, just made her homesick. He hoped she didn't mean Aperture. He really had no intention of going there, based on the stories of GLaDOS. Sometimes Chell would wake up and go into fits, trying to scream and desperately tell him that the turrets were right there... not the singing turrets, the... the... she'd sob, leaning on his shoulder. He wasn't sure he believed that the nightmares were "fine." Still, he didn't want to intrude in on her privacy. He simply sat and let her cry herself back to sleep. Often the next morning, she'd wake up, cheerful, with no memory of what had happened. He decided that she sleep-cried, if that was even a thing. Either way it was terrifying. Watching her fearful eyes search the area for something that wasn't there gave him nightmares. They'd been slowly making their way to Aperture, without either of them realizing it. It was just Chell's instinctive direction. Finally, after walking all morning one day, they came across a shed in the middle of a field. Gordon looked at her quizzically, she knew he was wondering what this was, and why they were there. She could only answer the first question. The other was too hard to explain, because in all honesty, she wasn't sure. She didn't know whether to tell him or not, but finally decided that before they descended into the bowels of the earth, he needed a choice. She was begging the sky that he'd say no, and just wait for her outside, but he looked determined enough to go with her and protect her. She tried to convince him that she didn't need protected. He had dismissed her comments, and remained dead set on following her in. Even if it killed both of them.

The elevator was exactly how she remembered it, dark, creepy, and home. She sighed, breathing in the sweet scent of old moon panels and gel. The sweet smell of science. She pressed the button and let the elevator carry the two of them down into the facility. She kept waiting and waiting to hear GLaDOS' familiar voice. After about five minutes of silence, she'd started to get worried. The air was buzzing with anticipation. She rubbed her knuckles nervously with her thumb and tried to find a security camera. Nothing. Now she was scared. She didn't want GLaDOS to be dead, she wanted to hear her talk again, to hear what she had to say about Chell coming back. Gordon had no idea what was running through this crazy woman's mind. What was she thinking? Coming back to her personal hell? Did she WANT to get herself killed? And him along with her? Granted, she had given him a choice, and he'd come with her. Guess that meant he was crazy too. Of course, he'd already known that. After deciding GLaDOS was... sleeping... hopefully... Chell moved onto the problem of showing how much she appreciated all Rattmann had done. She set off in search of his collection of homes, Gordon trailing along behind, confused to death. She didn't explain her intentions, simply let him follow her. She wasn't used to giving orders, or explaining things, certainly not down here. This place had always just been her, doing what she had

to. Listening to GLaDOS tell her what to do. Not her instructing others... She wasn't really used to having a companion. The cube didn't count. She wasn't sure how to include Wheatley in her mess of thoughts, she was quite content to forget him. Life was complicated enough, she didn't need to consider how she felt about him. He wasn't even here...

"Chell, would you mind, explaining, WHERE WE ARE GOING?" Chell could tell that Gordon was annoyed, his expression was very good at conveying that. It was funny though, down here, she didn't care. This place was... hers. Still, she felt she should at least let him know what was going on,

"Okay, this is hard to admit, but through the nightmares, there's this... I miss this place. And, it's not for the reasons you'd think-

"You miss Her. What the hell is wrong with you Chell? She tried to kill you, let it go."

"She saved my life." Chell scowled.

"No, Caroline saved your life."

"She is Caroline." Chell looked satisfied as Gordon didn't know how to reply to that. She kept walking, not turning to see if he was following. At each corner, she looked for the searching eyes of turrets, the cameras, the comforting yellow glow from the AI's optic. She didn't want to think that she might never see GLaDOS again. It didn't make any sense, she'd been searching for ages, trying to find another person, and now that she had Gordon, she only cared about GLaDOS (and Rattmann...). She felt guilty, like she was abandoning her friend. But he was used to being alone, they both were. She guessed that they both expected anyone they got close to to disappear, or die. It usually happened, so it wasn't like they were unusually paranoid. Just accepted reality. She winced, realizing that despite her instincts, GLaDOS had to be dead, she loved her, so she had died, she was still searching. It wasn't quite in character for her, but she still kept looking. She showed Gordon to one of Rattmann's dens, quickly checking to see if Rattmann was nearby. Nothing. She sighed, settling down to eat an expired can of beans with Gordon. She traced the drawings, Gordon silently watching her from across the room, slowly chewing his food.

"You miss more than Her. You miss everything here. The walls, the smells, the pictures, and I know damn well you miss your portal gun. But you know what? I miss you. We've been here for days, and you've barley paid any attention to me. I mean, I'm used to being ignored, but not by you. So, I was waiting for the right time to give you this, I guess now's as good a time as any." He reached into his bag of guns and slowly drew out a gun, he held it toward her. She looked at it in awe, it was her gun. Her ASHPOD. She let out the loudest squeak of joy she could manage, before snatching the gun from him and rubbing it against her cheek. Gordon smiled as she cried tears of joy. This item should have scared her to death, made her remember the fear, the pain, the bullets, the bottomless pits, the acid burns. But it also reminded her of Her.

"How did you find it?"

"Well, this morning when we were climbing down that shaft, I saw it wedged in a mess of wires."

"Why didn't you give it to me earlier?" Chell asked, playfully slapping his arm.

"I didn't know how you'd react, I guess I expected you to go into shock or something, I'm still not exactly sure how you feel about this place. All I know is that you're crazy as GLaDOS herself." Chell took that as a compliment and fell asleep, hugging her portal gun. Gordon stayed up longer, watching her chest rise and fall as for the first time in months, she slept peacefully. He saw her smile, wishing something so simple could destroy his nightmares, but there just wasn't anything to be done about the haunting screams of everyone you knew interrupting your every thought. He wasn't all that tired, too worried about what the next day might bring. He gently rubbed his thumb over the cold metal of his crowbar, wishing he could hug it and drift off as easily as she had. Instead he sat at the front of the room, peering out of the bent panel, making sure nothing would hurt them. The voice caught him off guard, he hadn't heard anyone talk for ages...

"Hello... and welcome... to.. the eNRRRRRiCCChhhMMEeeENNnNNT
Centerrrrrrrrrrrrrr... SHUT UP CAROLINE! CHELLL? CHELL IS NOT HERE!
Chell is... Chelllllllllllllllllllll..."

End
file.